

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

October 2007

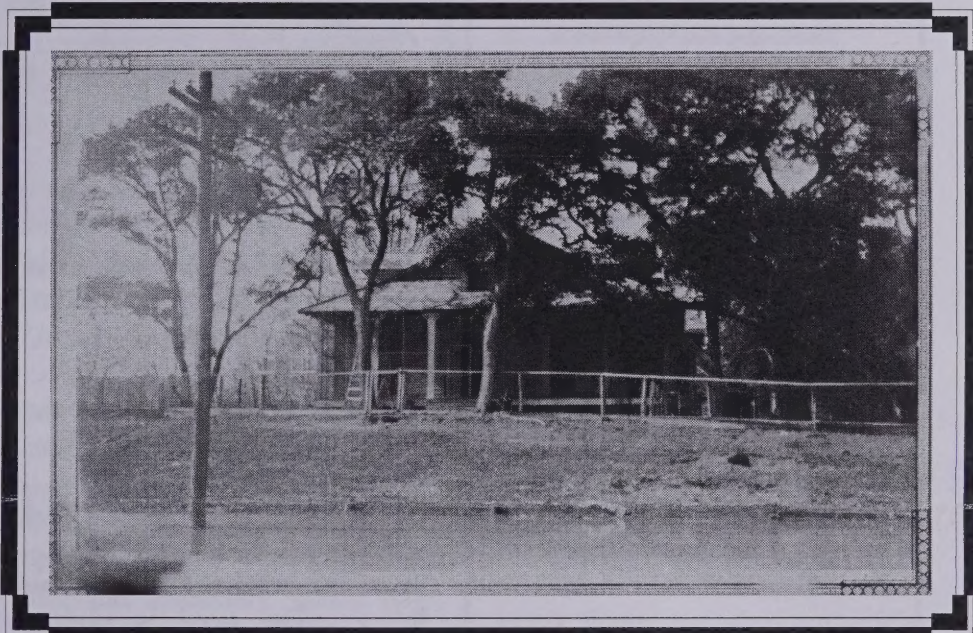
COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

Welcome to October, a time of ghosts, goblins, and things that “go bump in the night”! The 14th Annual Halloween Tour will be held on Wednesday, October 31, 2007, at Cedar Rest Cemetery in the 200 block of South Second Street in Bay Saint Louis. The fun begins at 5:00 P. M. and runs until 8:00 P. M.

Everyone is invited to assemble at the main entrance to the Cedar Rest Cemetery for an exciting, informative, and historical tour. Guides will lead visitors through the cemetery, and Historical Society members will portray local citizens buried there who recount interesting aspects of their lives. Admission to the tour is free, but donations are accepted and used to maintain the gravesites and headstones in the cemetery.

After the tour everyone is invited to the Lobrano House at 108 Cue St. for punch, cookies, and other treats.

As is our usual custom, we will not have a luncheon this month so that we can devote all of our energies to the Halloween Tour.



The Bourgeois House stood at 734 South Beach Boulevard, Waveland, prior to being destroyed by Hurricane Camille August 17, 1969.

“ONCE UPON A MID- NIGHT, DREARY....”

Edited by
Eddie Coleman

The words of horror master Edgar Allan Poe ring throughout the halls of schools the world over. Often Americans denigrate the actual artistry and mastery of this native-born genius because they think of him only as a writer of “scary stories.” True, he *did* write “scary stories,” but upon closer inspection one can see that his

tales and poems of horror and terror transcend the macabre and enter the realm of introspection and reflection. Where did Poe get his material? Was it just from his imaginative mind? Or was it from “ghost stories” he had heard during his short life? One wonders. The Mississippi Coast has a bountiful share of ghost stories, some told for many generations. Perhaps a modern-day Poe could make use of some of these.

One story which may interest a modern teller of tales concerns a Waveland family who can attest to hearing their house’s



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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

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"TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION."

ghost and actually to having caught him in a photograph. The ghost of Leon Bourgeois and his sister-guardian Angeline were captured on film the day after Hurricane Camille in 1969. The home had been demolished except for the front steps.

The Bourgeois family had built the house in the 19th Century, and the last of that family to occupy it were the invalid Leon and his caretaker, Angeline. It had changed hands several times until the family of Carlos J. Lozano, Jr., bought it in 1958. Mr. Lozano's wife, Lois, said that she occasionally caught a glimpse of Leon, a shadowy figure on the stairs, or heard something like the dragging of feet in carpet slippers in the hall.

The day after Camille when Lozano hired a photogra-

pher to record the damage to the house on South Beach in Waveland, the developed photo showed Leon and Angeline sitting behind the steps.

"Before Camille, I saw him and heard him all the time," Mrs. Lozano said. "But after the storm, we never saw him again. Some ghost experts say that after the house was destroyed, he no longer had anything to haunt."

**GHOST OF THE
PIRATE HOUSE**

Another famous Waveland ghost who disappeared after "his" house was demolished by Camille was the ghoul who haunted Jean Lafitte's Pirate House. In a 1986 *Sun Herald* article, Kat Bergeron recorded the following sighting:

"After she had turned off the living room light and started up the staircase, Mrs. James W. Faulkner screamed. Standing at the top of the stairs was a death-like image of a man whose stare was almost hypnotic. When Mrs. Faulkner moved towards him, he vanished into nothingness.

"Blood-stained walls, unexplained moans, screams and ghostly apparitions had long been a part of the Pirate House mystique. The 1930's incident was one of many incidents stretching over more than a century at the large, elegant home on Waveland's beachfront road.

"The large house reportedly was built in 1802 by a New Orleans businessman who moonlighted as a pirate and financial agent of Jean Lafitte and

The time is nigh to elect board members to serve from January 2008 through December 2010. Final selections will be made in elections at the November meeting.

Our nominating committee will submit its recommendations, but we are also asking the general membership for nominations. If you would like to serve or to recommend someone, please call 467-4090 or nominate from the floor at the November meeting. The offices being filled this year are president, 2nd vice president, publicity chairperson, and historian. A special "thank you" goes to those who have served on the board during these past trying two years.



"The Pirate House" once stood on North Beach Boulevard in Waveland. Unfortunately, it was destroyed in 1969 by Hurricane Camille.

his Barataria pirates. Some accounts say the house actually belonged to Lafitte. A tunnel ran from the water's edge to the house's basement, which some believed doubled as a holding place for 'black ivory,' illegally smuggled slaves.

One of the earliest legends of the site tells of a deep well in the back yard that became the early graves of three men who had been thrown, alive, into its depths. That very afternoon the ghost of one of them who was wearing shirt sleeves returned to walk across the yard—and he has continued to do so.

"In the mid-1930's when the Singreens bought the house, a large photograph was snapped of everyone standing on the front gallery steps. When it was developed, an image of a man in shirt sleeves could be seen at the window of an upstairs room.

"Later owners, Mr. and

Mrs. Bjorn Lister, liked to think of the old house as not haunted, just inhabited by 'visitants.' Then came murderous Hurricane Camille, a 1969 storm that tore the legendary house apart like match sticks. The Listers collected the thousands of bricks strewn about the area, including the doors and grillwork they could find, and constructed a much smaller cottage 50 feet to the rear of the original house.

"And were the ghosts blown away too? Officially, yes, but there are rumors...."

THE ETHEREAL HARPIST

Edited by
Eddie Coleman

Another story of ghosts on the Gulf Coast arises from a tale told of an unfaithful wife in the 1800's. It seems that a

Señor Vinesto and his much younger wife Julia booked passage from their native Uruguay to New Orleans. During the trip Julia became bored. Troubled by his wife's "moodiness" and attempting to cheer her sagging spirits, Señor Vinesto purchased a harp to replace an earlier one lost or left in Uruguay.

As her playing entertained the crew, her roving eye fell upon Captain Hawes, captain of the ship. But he was way ahead of her and had already set his cap to seduce her. Unfortunately for Señor Vinesto, the captain was also aware of another asset which the seaman desired—a chest full of gold coins. Therefore, "it was not surprising that Señor Vinesto 'accidentally' fell overboard and disappeared."

Afraid that Julia would break down and alert authorities once they reached New Orleans, Hawes anchored off Pass Christian instead. After dark, inhabitants of the Pass ventured toward the ship in small boats, lured by a strange radiance which they supposed was fire aboard the vessel. However, a shattering explosion of the ship stopped them!

Apparently the captain and four crewmen made their way ashore the next morning purporting to be the only ones to escape the inferno. According to legend Captain Hawes "bought a house facing the Gulf" and spent the remainder of his life living and prospering in the gulf side hamlet. Seemingly all went well until one of the crewmen lay on

his deathbed and confessed his part in the demise of Julia and Señor Vinesto.

Fearful of being punished, Hawes went to an old tree on the shoreline immediately and began to dig, his actions witnessed by a group of locals including a doctor. Suddenly, there was the squeaking sound "of rusty oarlocks and harp music." Observers looked to the water and saw a rowboat "manned by four skeletons and a ghostly young woman playing a harp." Captain Hawes fell dead striking his head on the chest. The chest was empty, but his hand held a few gold coins!

SOURCE:

Back, Edith. "Coast Ghosts." *The Historian*, October 1995.

Bergeron, Kat. *The Sun Herald*, 1989.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN

By
Eddie Coleman

The celebration of Halloween dates from the time of the ancient Celts and Druids of Ireland. What we now term as *Halloween* on October 31 was the day between the end of summer and the beginning of the winter season on November 1. Ancient Celts called this time Samhain (sow-en). Winter was also the beginning of the Celtic New Year. Since October 31 was "between seasons," it was considered a magical time of year when all constraints of time and the distinction between the spirit world and the human world were

lifted. The usual order of Celtic society became a time of disorder or chaos. Thus, the time from October 31 to November 2 was a time when strange and unusual things could happen.

Among the supernatural things were the beliefs that movement between the physical and spiritual worlds could occur without harm and that living persons could make contact with departed souls. The Celts did not think of this world of the dead with any sort of fear or apprehension. Rather, they looked to the spirits of their ancestors to give them guidance and inspiration.

With the conquest of Ireland and the British Isles by the Romans and the domination of the Catholic Church, changes had to be made. In the same way that early church leaders had combined other Pagan celebrations with Christian holidays, they incorporated the end of summer celebration with All Saints' Day (All Hallows) on November 1 and All Souls' Day on November 2. Hence, "All Hallows evening" was contracted and shortened from "Hallows evening" into "Hallow-e'en" or "Halloween."

When the Irish left the "Green Isle" because of the potato famine in the mid-1800's and came to America, they brought with them the traditions of Halloween which their forefathers had observed. One of these was the custom of pulling pranks on neighbors during this celebration. Fortunately, the extent of such stunts was confined

to overturning outhouses and removing gates from fences.

Although not part of the Celtic rituals, the Halloween tradition of trick-or-treating has a cloudy history. It appears to have come from a ninth-century continental European custom. Some authorities attribute it to the idea that spirits lurked about on Halloween, so mortal adults dressed as ghoulishly as possible to ward off the evil spirits. In their frightening garb, they went from house to house seeking treats to prevent their damaging the homeowner's property. Others believe the habit comes from a custom on All Souls' Day in which early Christians went from village to village, seeking soul cakes (small breads) as payment for their praying a deceased soul out of limbo and into heaven.

Many of the modern symbols of Halloween—witches, black cats, goblins, skeletons, vampires, bats, etc.—were not associated with the celebration until medieval times and the later Reformation when a belief in witchcraft became widespread throughout Europe and the American colonies. These additions notwithstanding, it is the children who derive the most pleasure from celebrating Halloween. They enjoy dressing as ghosts, goblins, witches, and various characters to go trick-or-treating.

SOURCE:

Bonewits, Isaac. "The Real Origins of Halloween." Sept. 6, 2007. 2006 <<http://www.neo-pagan.net>>.

Wilson, Jerry. "History and Customs of Halloween." Sept. 6, 2007. 2002 <<http://wilstar.com>>.



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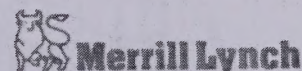
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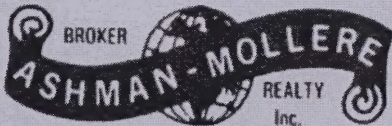
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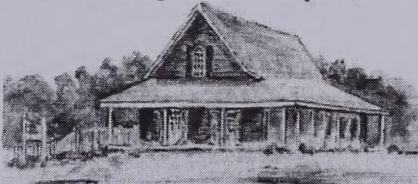
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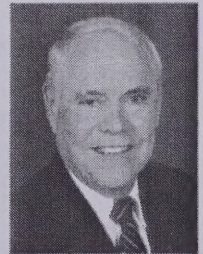
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